

Hillcrest CHURCH

Today's Gathering

November 16th, 2014

View from the Hill

Pastor Doug Bartel

Singing

Gary Rakebrandt and Jesse VanderWeide



Ask Like Abraham

Pastor Brian Stroh

For the Kids

From 9:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Parents can go to the Children's Welcome Center to find out about our Sunday morning options and check their children in. The Children's Welcome Center is located on the east side of the main foyer.

See page 5 of the bulletin for more information about opportunities for Children and Students.

Welcome to Hillcrest

New to Hillcrest?

If you are new to Hillcrest, we'd like to say "Welcome!" We're glad you're here this morning. Please stop by the Welcome Center, following the worship service to meet one of our pastors and receive a **free gift**.

Ready to Take the Next Step?

Hillcrest provides many opportunities to get involved with others in the church and the community. If you would like to find out more about classes, Bible studies, and small groups that are offered, stop by the Welcome Center, check out the Ministries section on our web site at www.sioxfordchurch.com, or call the church office at 371-0546.

Our Weekly Bulletin and Devotional

Hillcrest provides this weekly bulletin/devotional to help you connect, serve others and study the Bible throughout the week.

On pages 3-5, you will discover connecting and serving opportunities as well as information regarding Children's and Student's Ministries.

On page 6, you have a place to take notes from the message. Also on page 6 is a memory verse, selected each week by Hillcrest leaders.

On pages 7-12, you will find a short devotional for each day. You will read a new text, some commentary and consider some questions to further your growth, as well as a challenge to help you take what you have studied and start to live it!

On page 13, you will find a Prayer Page, where you can keep track of your daily prayers. On page 14, you will find staff contact info.

Our prayer is that God will speak to you as you study His Word and as a result, it will impact the people in your life.

Want information on even more events happening at Hillcrest? Sign up for our weekly e-mail by marking your connection card and turning it in. Don't forget to include your e-mail address!

Connect

Baptism & Membership

Our next baptism service will be on November 30th. Christ asked all of his followers to be baptized, in fact the Apostle Paul said, "Why wait? Get up and be baptized." Baptism is available for any person that has accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. If you are interested in baptism, contact Pastor Doug or Pastor Brian to reserve a spot.

Interested in joining Hillcrest as a member? Please check the box on the connection card on the back of the program or talk with Pastor Doug or Brian.

Ask Anything

In November, we will be starting a series called "Ask Anything", in which Pastor Doug or Pastor Brian will answer any question that you have. To submit a question, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SKBQM6H> or write it on your comment card in the bulletin. You can submit it anonymously, or you can provide your name.

Christmas Schedule

Sunday, November 30th – Angel Tree sign up starts

Saturday, December 6th – Women's Ministry Festival of Tables

Saturday, December 13th – Rehearsal for Children's Christmas Program at 10am

Sunday, December 14th – "Christmas in Black & White" Children's Christmas Program. Meet in gym (pre-schoolers in the Dog House) at 8:40am.

Wednesday, December 17th – Delivery of Angel Tree gifts, starting at 6pm

Wednesday, December 17th – Additional serving opportunities; Contact Pastor Brian if you are interested

Wednesday, December 24th – Candlelight Christmas Eve Service at 5:30pm

Wednesday, December 31st – 180 Student Ministries New Year's Eve Party

Serve

November Mission Focus – Safe Families

Safe Families is a bridge between under-resourced families and the foster care system. A Safe Family would take in children to allow a mom or dad time to locate work, locate housing, complete treatment, etc. without the child having to move into the foster care system.

During the month of November, Hillcrest will be collecting diapers, wipes, and WalMart gift cards for Safe Families. (Reminder that you can order WalMart cards from SCRIP! We will have some available to pick up at the Welcome Center, too!)

There are many other ways to get involved with Safe Families for Children. If you would like more information about how you can volunteer, please visit their web site at <http://www.safe-families.org/default.aspx> or contact Pastor Brian.

SCRIP Program

Now is the time when many of us start thinking about Christmas shopping! If you like to give gift cards, check out Hillcrest's SCRIP program on our web site under "About Us", then "Online Giving"! Each gift card you buy gives a percent of the purchase back to Hillcrest's Student Ministries. It may not seem like a lot, but it adds up fast! You can designate the money to go to a specific student or to the general fund. Right now, students are saving for their Winter Retreat in February. To get your cards before Christmas, you will need to order them no later than December 14th. If you have questions or need help getting signed up, contact Jennifer Simons or Brian Stroh for assistance.

Children's Ministry

All children should stop at the Children's Check-In, located on the north side of the front foyer, before going to their classroom.

9 AM Children's Program

Building Blocks: Infants and 1 year olds
Bird House: 2-4 year olds

10:30 AM Children's Program

Building Blocks: Infants & 1 year olds
Bird House: 2 year olds
Tree House: 3 year olds
Dog House: 4 year olds
Club House: K-5th Grade

"Christmas in Black & White"

On Sunday, December 14th, during both services, Hillcrest Children's Ministries will be performing their Christmas Program, "Christmas in Black & White." All children in pre-school through 5th grade will participate. The children will be practicing their songs during our normal worship time at 10:30am, each Sunday in November. We will also have a special dress rehearsal on Saturday, December 13th at 10am.

Student Ministry

180 Sunday Classes

Middle School and High School students are invited to meet in the Youth Room during the 10:30am service. Students will then break into small groups.

180 Wednesday Nights

Middle School students meet from 6-7:30pm and High School students meet from 7:30-9pm. Includes lesson, small group time, snack, and games!

180 Events

The Winter Camp has been scheduled for February 12th-15th. Pick up a brochure and registration form at the Welcome Center or from Meriah for more information.

Message Notes:

Title: Ask Like Abraham

Scripture: Genesis 18:16-33

Notes

For those going deeper:

This week's memory verse

Proverbs 16:9 (NLT) We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps.

Monday

Subject: Fearing to Ask

Scripture: Genesis 18:16-19

Commentary:

Abraham, the father of a new nation (promised by God Himself), upon feeding and entertaining two messengers of God, quakes with fear when he discovers their mission: to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. How can he, Abraham, spare his nephew, Lot, and Lot's family, who live there? Is it permitted to ask such a thing of God? Abraham is not sure.

Questions for further thought:

1. Are we sometimes like Abraham, afraid to ask things that we think are too "controversial" for God?
2. Do we think that He'll judge us if we do ask Him something we're not entirely sure of, ourselves?

Challenge:

Let us remember that God is the God of knowledge and wisdom. He will not withhold His answers from us, even if we ask things we're unsure of, up to and including doubting His own *existence.* He will not keep good things, or His wisdom, from us, so long as we humbly petition Him for wisdom and knowledge, and carefully, prayerfully, *listen* to His answers.

Tuesday

Subject: God's righteousness (and mercy)
is still present

Scripture: Genesis 18:20-25

Commentary:

Abraham has it confirmed: the men (with God's power) are there to utterly destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham fears for his nephew and his family. Quaking in his shoes, Abraham is aware of God's righteous anger ready to be unleashed. But, miraculously, God speaks through the messengers that He will not destroy the cities if there are 50 righteous men. Abraham is amazed at this holy forbearance!

Questions for further thought:

1. In questioning God, do we remember that He is also merciful, as well as mighty, and righteous?
2. Do we think He will ignore us, His own children?

Challenge:

God is merciful, as well as righteous. Let's remember that He is not afraid of anything, including being merciful to entire cities. We do not "bargain" with Him; He extends mercy *to* us. Let us ask for that mercy wherever and whenever we can: for ourselves, our families, towns, cities, and even the nations of the world daily. Amen.

Wednesday

Subject: Bargaining, Round 1

Scripture: Genesis 18:26–28

Commentary:

Abraham, afraid of testing God's infinite patience and mercy, wonders/asks aloud if God would spare Sodom and Gomorrah for only 45 righteous men in the cities. Again, God states that He would spare them for that number of righteous. Abraham can hardly believe that he is actually (so he thinks) "bargaining" with the Almighty God! But, where to go from here?

Questions for further thought:

1. Do we sometimes think that we can "bargain" with God?
2. If we do, do we take it into account that we have amazing bargaining *skills?* (Do we remember that He knew our every thought before the universe was made)?

Challenge:

Again, let us not be afraid to ask things of God, sincerely and humbly, but we should remember: God does not "bargain." He shows mercy. We can neither command it, nor expect it automatically, *save* with a contrite heart and repentant spirit. So it was with Abraham then, and so it is with us today. Pray that we keep that spirit all of our days.

Thursday

Subject: Going Down!

Scripture: Genesis 18:29-30

Commentary:

Abraham continues to be humble, and amazed, as he continues to plea for God to stay His wrath against Sodom and Gomorrah. The count in these two verses is that God will not destroy the cities if there are 40, and then 30, righteous men. Abraham is surprised, humbled, and awed, but he must be wondering: "How much lower can I ask, before God's righteousness wins out over His patience with me?" Good question!

Questions for further thought:

1. God is merciful, of course. But, do we recognize that He's also righteous and cannot have evil around Him?
2. Do we ever put "limits" on God's mercy, in our own minds?

Challenge:

Let us remember that, although we cannot "bargain" with God, when we ask Him things, He is merciful, generous, and good enough to answer our questions and prayers, so long as we're contrite and *focused on Him* when we ask. He is perfectly capable of being both merciful and just in anything He does, including in answering us.

Friday

Subject: Surprises

Scripture: Genesis 18:31–33

Commentary:

Abraham, continuing his “dialogue” with God, asks God to pardon Sodom and Gomorrah, and God, miraculously (to Abraham) states that He will pardon both cities for the sake of 20, and then only 10, good, righteous men. That’s about the size of Lot’s immediate family and household! Abraham is pleased, and amazed, and goes home, probably pondering God’s amazing mercy.

Questions for further thought:

1. Again, do we try to “bargain” with God, forgetting that He knows all of our innermost thoughts and desires before we’re even at the table?
2. Are we sometimes amazed by God’s mercy, as Abraham was?

Challenge:

Let us remember that God is a Lord of mercy, and love, and that He will often surprise us with those traits. But, let us *not be afraid* to ask any good thing from Him. He will not – he CANNOT – keep it from us! Lord, please help us daily in seeking your wisdom above all, and to freely accept your mercy, and righteousness, in our daily lives, those of our family, state, nation, and world. You are the merciful yet mighty Judge of the universe. Amen!

Saturday

(Looking to Sunday)

Message Series: Ask Anything
Message Title: Ask Like Doug
Scripture: Proverbs 16:9
Speaker: Pastor Doug Bartel

What do these passages say to you?

Prayer Page:

Write down the prayer concerns and praises you want to remember throughout the week. Pray every day!

If you would like to receive the email prayer chain, check the box on the Connection Card. You can also submit prayer requests through the church web site or by calling the church office.

[illegible]

James 5:16

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

Staff Contact Information



Doug Bartel

Lead Pastor

dougbartel@siouxfallschurch.com



Brian Stroh

Ministry Pastor

brianstroh@siouxfallschurch.com



Jesse VanderWeide

Worship Ministries Coordinator

jessev@siouxfallschurch.com



Meriah VanderWeide

Student Ministries Coordinator

mvanderweide@siouxfallschurch.c



Tarina Stroh

Children's Ministries Coordinator

tarinastroh@siouxfallschurch.com

Jennifer Simons

Administrative Assistant

jennifersimons@siouxfallschurch.com

Connection Card

Please fill out, tear at perforation and place in collection plate or drop off at Welcome Center as you leave.

PRAYER REQUESTS

☐ Keep confidential (Pastoral staff) or ☐ Put on the Prayer Chain

☐ I would like to sign up for Hillcrest's upcoming event. (Please specify.)

My next step today is to:

- ☐ Read and study the scriptures and devotionals, provided on pages 6-12.
- ☐ Find out more information about baptism and/or membership.

Additional Comments:



4301 E. 26th St. Sioux Falls, SD 57103

605-371-0546

www.sioxfordschurch.com

Connection Card

Please fill out and tear at perforation and place in collection plate or drop off at Welcome Center as you leave.

Name _____ Address _____

E-Mail _____ City/State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Check all that apply:

☐ 1st Visit --- How did you hear about Hilcrest? _____

☐ 2nd Visit _____
(web site, newspaper, radio, name of person who invited you, etc.)

☐ Returning Guest

☐ Regular Attender

☐ Members

I am interested in:

☐ beginning a relationship with Jesus ☐ being baptized

☐ receiving the Hilcrest Informational E-mail.

☐ joining a small group ☐ becoming a member of Hilcrest

☐ volunteering ☐ praying for my Hilcrest family (received via e-mail)

One of the pastors will contact you with information on these subjects.

Your Age Group:

☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-35

☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55

☐ 56-65 ☐ over 65

☐ Single ☐ Married

☐ Divorced

☐ Widowed

☐ Other: _____

**Names & Birthdays of
members of your
household**

